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SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA, STATE - USAID HUMANITARIAN
UPDATE NUMBER 5

REF: A)STATE 27057; B)NAIROBI 00968; C)NAIROBI 01238
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This is the fifth update cable in response to Ref A
request for biweekly reports on the humanitarian
situation in the Horn of Africa. USAID Missions in
Kenya and Ethiopia, REDSO (Somalia, Djibouti), and
OFDA/ECARO contributed to this report.

RAINFALL UPDATE

1. The widespread heavy rains experienced in the
region during the first ten days, or dekad, of April
subsided in the second dekad. During the second dekad
of April, most parts of Somalia and Djibouti, northern
and eastern Kenya, and the eastern half of Ethiopia,
where most of the drought-affected populations are
found, received only light showers (from 5 to 25mm) or
remained dry. Most of these areas had received heavy
rains and experienced flash floods in the first dekad
of the month, but now seem to be facing a dry spell.
The potential consequences of this dry spell are most
serious in the eastern drought affected parts of the
region, where it could result in poor development of
pasture and agriculture.

COUNTRY REPORTS

12. KENYA

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT: Heavy downpours in the first two weeks of April displaced farmers and destroyed crops in the lakeshore districts, while increasing the risk of diseases, such as pneumonia, among the livestock population. Rains rendered some roads impassable, particularly in North Eastern Province where the infrastructure is poor. Consequently, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) reported that the April relief food distribution in the area was delayed by two weeks. Rains have now subsided in most areas, with light showers (5 to 25 mm) reported in most of the drought-affected areas, allowing scheduled food distribution to take place.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK: Latest forecasts indicate decreased likelihood of flooding in drought-affected areas; however, coastal areas may continue to receive persistent heavy rains. The long-rains have brought some immediate relief to drought-affected pastoralist areas, mainly in terms of water availability. However, well-distributed and sustained rains during the season will be needed for full development of pastures and crops in all areas.

From April 13 to 17, a USAID assessment team traveled to drought-affected agricultural areas in Kitui District and pastoralist areas in Garissa and Wajir districts. In Kitui, the team reported that rains have arrived and farmers are preparing to plant. The team

recommends continuing food security programs, such as seed and livelihood fairs and agriculture extension activities. In Garissa and Wajir, the team noted that rains have arrived too late to protect pastoralist livelihoods and continued rains and assistance are required for full recovery. The team recommends promoting diversification of herd composition and animal health services to increase pastoralist resiliency to future shocks as well as a long-term alternative livelihood strategy. Water remains a critical concern for both refugee and host communities in Wajir. Boreholes that were operating on a 24-hour basis during the drought are in need of rehabilitation in order to mitigate further humanitarian decline if the current rains are poor and during future droughts.

OTHER TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST: Health facilities reported an increase in malaria, measles, and some cases of cholera in North Eastern Province, particularly in Wajir District. Local authorities, with assistance from international organizations such as UNICEF, appear to have the latter two incidents under control. With USAID/OFDA support, UNICEF and the Kenya Ministry of Health will begin a measles vaccination campaign on April 29, targeting 560,000 children in at-risk districts.

Local and cross-border conflicts over pasture and cattle rustling continue unabated in Samburu, Laikipia, and Marsabit districts. Local civil society organizations, with the help of the affected communities and the government, are attempting to address the problem through dialogue and discussions. However, longer-term solutions involving high-level government officials of the contiguous countries will be necessary to address the various facets of the cross border conflicts.

13. ETHIOPIA

On April 20, Assistant Administrator of the USAID

Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (AA/DCHA) Michael E. Hess, departed from Ethiopia, concluding his three-country visit to drought-affected areas in the Horn of Africa.

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT: Despite above normal rains in many affected areas in early April, rains have slowed or stopped during the last 10 days. Recent forecasts have been for minimal rainfall, when more is needed. The above normal rains in early April were torrential at times, causing flash flooding which disrupted food distributions, destroyed homes, and killed animals.

DONOR RESPONSE UPDATE: USAID/OFDA continues to prioritize activities to meet the most urgent needs in pastoralist areas. Since the last reporting period, USAID/OFDA has committed nearly 800,000 U.S. dollars (USD) to International Medical Corps (IMC) for emergency nutrition activities, including the establishment of community-based therapeutic care (CTC) programs in Borena Zone, Oromiya Region, and Liben and

Afder zones, Somali Region. This followed a multi-sectoral USG assessment of Afder and Liben zones in early April, where the team found that few nutrition programs were currently operational and good reason to expect that the nutritional status of children could deteriorate further. IMC's activities will support approximately 183,000 beneficiaries in these critical areas.

UPDATE ON FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK: Pastoralist Livelihood Initiative (PLI) partners continue to implement already approved emergency response activities. Commercial off-take of animals continues, but due to rains pastoralists are not as willing to sell animals and lower numbers are being purchased by traders. Partners continue to have in place their revolving funds, as well as a credit scheme with a private bank. This activity will last until the end of May, 2006, unless the drought persists, in which case it will be extended. Some PLI partners will conduct short impact assessments of their emergency response interventions to benefit from lessons learned.

PLI partners are starting to focus more on development activities which were de-emphasized during the rapid and efficient switch to an emergency response mode. Partners are now focusing on finalizing animal feed studies, value chain analysis, rehabilitation and construction of livestock market infrastructure, training and technical assistance to Community Animal Health Workers.

The PLI Steering Committee, chaired by the State Minister for Agriculture and including representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Afar, Somali, and Oromiya Regional Governments, the World Bank, Tufts University, and USAID/Ethiopia, met on Tuesday, April 18. PLI received support from all steering committee members to start working on the harmonization of best practice guidelines for animal health, animal feed, and commercial off-take of animals to be used during emergency response activities. The Steering Committee also agreed to the formation of a Livestock Policy Forum, which will focus on best-practice livestock relief interventions in pastoralist areas.

DPPA/WFP PIPELINE: As of April 24, the Government of Ethiopia's Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Agency (DPPA) has reported 72 percent and 60 percent of food allocations were dispatched for the Somali region for February and March respectively. Reported dispatches for the Oromiya region are higher, at 93 and 95 percent for February and March.

Despite significant attention from the Government and donors as well as some reported rains during March and early April 2006, food security in southern Somali Region and Borena Zone remains critical. Shortfalls of cereal food aid will continue to threaten food insecure populations, especially for the coming hunger-period (June to August) in highland areas. Even before taking into account recent increases in the number of people

in need of food aid from the re-assessment of needs in pastoral areas, an estimated 75,000 MT shortfall exists in emergency cereal food aid pledges between June and September due to the ongoing crisis in drought affected areas. Food aid shortfalls are expected to widen from July onwards causing serious concern for drought affected pastoralists.

Securing pledges for the second half of the year is critical in order to have sufficient stocks for the recovery phase in pastoral areas as well as to provide the necessary carryover for the next year Jilaal (dry) season that will begin as early as January 2007. Historically, January is the worst month for relief food dispatches as donors have not usually made pledges towards the next year's emergency appeal and the pipeline suffers a break. January 2007 will be critical as the pastoral areas experience the start of the dry season and any interruption in food aid support could further exacerbate the vulnerable situation of many expected to still be recovering from the current drought crisis.

Save the Children USA (SC/US), funded by USAID, has completed all February and March food transfers in Dolo Odo and Filtu. The February and March transfers for Dolo Abay are continuing, as transportation was disrupted there last week because of a local holiday. SC/US is processing a food loan from the Emergency Food Security Reserve Administration (EFSRA) in order to begin food transfers in five new woredas (Chereti, Bare, Hargele, Moyale, and El Kere) in the Somali Region before the food arrives in country from USAID. Food transfers are expected to start in the five new woredas in May.

14. SOMALIA

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT: Rainfall Update ? According to USAID-supported Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) Rain Watch Report, dated April 25, the 2006 Gu (main) rainy season has started in most of Somalia. In southern Somalia rains were generally well distributed and exceptionally good. Most of the southern regions received between 30 and 75 mm with some areas receiving up to 100 mm. However, in the northeastern and northwestern regions rains were patchy, insufficient and were unevenly distributed. Farmers have started planting crops, and pasture is regenerating in most pastoral areas. Water availability has also improved in many areas.

The Somalia Inter-Agency Logistics Cluster met on April 24. Based on feedback, areas of concern raised by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Somalia, include: purchase of non food items, transporter contracting, cross border operations, tax and duty exemption, warehousing capacity, ECHO and UNCAS flight schedules, transport rates, availability of local suppliers in Somalia, general security and humanitarian access, vessel movement, among others. The U.N. Regional Logistics Cell has set up a website at www.logisticscluster.org which will cater to all

countries in the Horn of Africa, as well as provide Sudan and Great Lakes country links.

DONOR RESPONSE UPDATE: In April, U.N. agencies received the following contributions: USD 605,000 from

Finland; USD 300,000 from Turkey; USD 851,000 from the U.N. Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); and USD 37,000 in from private, online donors. In addition the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) raised its contribution from USD 5.2 million to USD 6 million.

FOOD PIPELINE UPDATE: From February to mid-April, a total of 25,251 MTs of FFP Title II emergency food aid was distributed to 1,296,818 drought-affected people in south and central Somalia. This represents a 44 percent success in comparison to targeted levels. The food pipeline will remain stretched and distributions lower than planned at least through May. From June to September the pipeline will be healthy, and barring a major logistical barrier, planning levels of reaching roughly 1.5 million drought-affected should be reached.

At the request of the NSC Inter-Agency Working Group (IWG), USAID/FFP has drafted a food aid contingency plan looking at scenarios of decreased access and increased humanitarian need. Further information on this document can be obtained from Nick Cox at ncox@usaid.gov.

OTHER TOPICS OF SPECIAL INTEREST: On April 21, Mogadishu's Islamic Courts declared jihad, or holy war, on a militia alliance, the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT), which is widely believed to be backed by the United States. At least 52 people were killed and hundreds displaced in Mogadishu in March in the bloodiest fighting in years between these two groups. Reportedly, the two sides are repositioning forces and stockpiling weapons and many Mogadishu residents are convinced new hostilities are imminent between the rival factions.

Conflicting media reports surfaced about whether or not the U.S. Navy had agreed to patrol the Somalia territorial waters to deter piracy. Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohammed Gedi told the transitional parliament that his government has permitted the U.S. Navy to patrol the coastal waters. However, the U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet spokesman said the U.S. Navy had no agreement with the Somali government.

There were no reported instances of piracy or hijacking during this reporting period. However, of immediate concern is a pending WFP-chartered 8,400 MT shipment of food from Mombasa, Kenya to Merka port in Somalia departing May 5 and arriving May 7 on the ?MV Marwan H?. The shipment is one of the largest undertaken yet and is particularly vital for pending food distributions. WFP notified the Coalition forces, MARLO office in Bahrain and has requested USAID to advocate for particular vigilance for the shipment to ensure safe passage and offloading of the food commodities.

15. DJIBOUTI

Michael Hess, Assistant Administrator for DCHA, was in Djibouti 13-15 April during his trip to the Horn of Africa assessing drought conditions. While in Djibouti, Mr. Hess visited the Djibouti port where he saw the offloading of US food aid, met with pastoralist communities affected by the drought, and witnessed a food distribution.

UPDATE ON THE HUMANITARIAN/DIPLOMATIC FRONT: Recent rains partially improved both vegetation and water resources in most pastoral livelihood zones with the exception of the Northwest pastoral livelihood zone where no rains were reported. There is a high risk that the upcoming hot season, with temperatures up to 40C and which is expected to start at the beginning of May, will dry out the greening pasture and browse,

particularly in coastal areas. Water catchments in the Northwest pastoral zone are nearly dry and pastoralists travel more than 5 kilometers in search of water. The coastal belt of Arta District and the highlands of Tadjourah and Obock districts received significant amount of rains while poor rains were observed in Alisabieh and Dikhil districts. This mixed picture has made forecasting of the current rainy season difficult. Current rains reportedly killed some of the remaining weakened animals.

UPDATE ON THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION AND OUTLOOK: The continuing rise in staple food prices is another concern to the overall food security in both urban and pastoral livelihoods. FEWS NET reports that dry food gifts from urban communities to pastoralists in rural areas has declined. As 80 percent of food is acquired through purchase in pastoral areas with 100 percent in urban zones, poor households in both urban and pastoral cannot afford to buy 100 percent of their food requirements with the current high prices. The prices of certain essential commodities like sugar have almost doubled in pastoral zones in comparison to 2003.

Although some donors, including USAID, are providing food aid through WFP, Kuwait Relief Agency and several others, non-food sectors are neglected. Emergency water interventions, for example, are urgently required in pastoral communities in the coastal areas of Obock and Northwest pastoral livelihood zone.

CONCLUSION

16. Satellite images in mid-April indicate some improvement in the vegetation cover in most areas that have received good rains; however, vegetation improvements are marginal in northern Kenya, most of Somalia, Djibouti and southeastern Ethiopia. Rains have regenerated pasture and water pans for pastoralist communities; however, continued assistance is required as it will take time for communities to recover from the harsh drought.

BELLAMY